

The Friendly Beasts

The words for this version of the carol were written by Robert Davis (1881-1950) in the 1920s

C *G⁶* *C*
 Jesus our brother kind and good,
F *G⁷* *C*
 Was humbly born in a stable rude.
D^m *G⁶* *Gadd11* *C*
 The friendly beasts around Him stood.
D^m *A^m* *G⁶* *C*
 Jesus our brother kind and good.

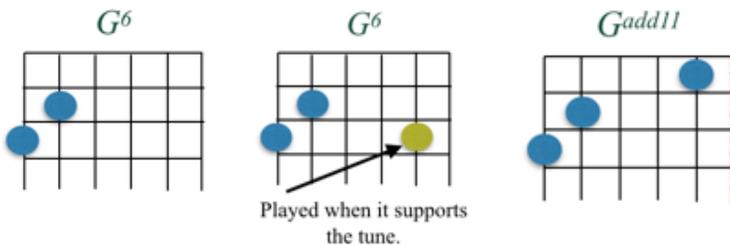
C *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the donkey all shaggy and brown,
F *G⁷* *C*
 I carried His mother up hill and down.
D^m *G⁶* *Gadd11* *C*
 I carried her safely to Bethlehem town.
D^m *A^m* *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the donkey all shaggy and brown.

C *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the cow all white and red,
F *G⁷* *C*
 I gave Him my manger for His bed.
D^m *G⁶* *Gadd11* *C*
 I gave Him my hay to pillow His head.
D^m *A^m* *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the cow all white and red.

C *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the sheep with the curly horn,
F *G⁷* *C*
 I gave Him my wool for a blanket warm.
D^m *G⁶* *Gadd11* *C*
 He wore my coat on Christmas morn.
D^m *A^m* *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the sheep with the curly horn.

C *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the dove from the rafters high,
F *G⁷* *C*
 I cooed Him to sleep so He would not cry.
D^m *G⁶* *Gadd11* *C*
 We cooed Him to sleep, my mate and I.
D^m *A^m* *G⁶* *C*
 I, said the dove from the rafters high.

C *G⁶* *C*
 So every beast, by some good spell,
F *G⁷* *C*
 In a stable rude was glad to tell,
D^m *G⁶* *Gadd11* *C*
 Of the gift he gave Immanu - - - el,
D^m *A^m* *G⁶* *C*
 The gift he gave Immanuel.



Christmas as you go

History

"The Friendly Beasts" seems to have originated in 12th-century France, set to the melody of the Latin song *Orientis Partibus*, which first appeared in France and is usually attributed to Pierre de Corbeil, Bishop of Sens (d 1222).



The Flight into Egypt, by Bartolomé Carducho between 1600 and 1603

The words and tune were designed to give thanks for the ass on which Mary rode, and began: *Orientis partibus Adventavit asinus* ('From the East the ass has come'). Each verse was sung, and finished with the chorus 'Hail, Sir donkey, hail'. It was a solemn affair, but the tune became very popular in 17th and 18th century Germany.

The tune is said to have been part of the *Fete de l'Ane* (The Donkey's Festival), which celebrated the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt and was a regular Christmas observance in Beauvais and Sens, France in the 13th century.

During the mass, it was common for a donkey to be led or ridden into the church.

The current English words were written by Robert Davis (1881-1950) in the 1920s.

Burl Ives included the song on his 1952 album "Christmas Day in the Morning". Since then, it has been recorded by many other artists, including Harry Belafonte, Johnny Cash, Rise Stevens, Danny Taddei, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Sufjan Stevens. Garth Brooks recorded it on his platinum "Beyond the Season" in 1992.

The song is also known as "The Song of the Ass," "The Donkey Carol," "The Animal Carol" and "The Gift of the Animals." Belafonte and Cash use the title "The Gifts They Gave."

hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com, lyricstranslate.com, pt.wikipedia.org, [Geri Waddington](http://GeriWaddington.com), and Wikipedia



The Friendly Beasts by Geri Waddington

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